

A scholar in the shadow: essays in the legal and theological thought of Ibn Qayyim al-Gawziyyah, edited by Caterina Bori and Livnat Holtzman, Rome, Istituto per l'Oriente C.A. Nallion di Roma, 2010, ix + 258 pp., €70.00 (paperback), EAN 977-0030547004

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350) has long been regarded as a peripheral figure to the polemic-natured jurist, theologian and traditionalist Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) in the resurgent medieval neo-Ḥanbalī movement. This narrative has afforded Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya the image and role of a faithful disciple, admirer, transmitter and elucidator of ‘the Taymiyyan way’ (p. 28). This image has cast an immense shadow over Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya’s scholastic oeuvre, which was intellectually more than the historical image of ‘his master’s deputy’ might suggest and has not been explored in any substantial Western academic research. However, this scenario seems to be changing as a new generation of scholars, many of whom have contributed to this collection, are conducting innovative research and publishing numerous articles and works on the medieval neo-Ḥanbalīte movement, as reformulated via the intellectual thought and legacy of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya. This is clear from a glance at this book’s extensive bibliography. Consequently, this edited collection can be seen as a precursor in providing the intellectual impetus for new scholarly activity that attempts to appreciate Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya *qua* Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya – not only through the intellectual milieu and legacy of Ibn Taymiyya, which he was pivotal in establishing, but in his own intellectual, synthetic and creative accomplishments.

This volume consists of a collection of 10 essays (eight in English and two in French) arranged into three main thematic sections (Society and law; God and man; Body and soul)

exploring Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's intellectual contributions. The book commences with an excellent introduction and overview of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's life, education, intellectual career and polemic confrontations. The editors maintain that Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's scholastic relationship with Ibn Taymiyya must be the starting point for any serious academic research, and further assert: 'Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah's oeuvre demands, by nature an inter-textual reading based on constant consultation with the works of his predecessors. Such reading helps evaluate the magnitude of his scholarship and reconstructs his methodology, editorial, and didactic considerations' (p. 31).

The first thematic section consists of three essays that endeavour to explore Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's legal methodology and his political thought within the Mamluk social milieu. Birgit Krawietz evaluates his contribution to the discipline of *uṣūl al-fiqh* via a systematic study and analysis of the content, style, underlying legal norms, practices and principles elaborated in the *Flām al-muwaqqiʿīn*. Krawietz explains that this does not adhere to the structure of a conventional *uṣūl al-fiqh* text, and is of a 'mercurial' nature (p. 63), as it incorporates other diverse legal discussions such as *ādāb al-muftī*, *ḥiyal* (legal stratagems) and specific case studies from *furūʾ al-fiqh*. Krawietz argues that the uniqueness of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's approach in *Flām al-muwaqqiʿīn* was that it was pragmatic in nature, rather than being a terse and theoretical scholastic discussion of *ijtihād*. It is this literary creativity and pragmatic legal concern that distinguished Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's hybrid legal approach from that of other legal theoreticians. Yehoshua Frenkel then discusses Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's political and social thought by elaborating on the concept of 'Islamic utopia', explaining how Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya constructed a utopian vision established on the historical narrations of the ideals and struggles of the Prophet and his Companions, and praxes of the pious *Salaf* of the first three centuries, which constituted the 'ideal Muslim prototype' to be emulated (p. 73). However, Frenkel maintains that Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's 'Islamic utopia' was a construct developed within his Mamluk social milieu. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's pragmatic nature is demonstrated by his discussion of threats to the 'Islamic utopia', which were ubiquitous within Mamluk society, including sexual deviancy, intermingling of genders, Sufi practices that were against Shari'a, and the public roles of non-Muslims, in particular 'the people of the book' (p. 82).

Questions surrounding 'the people of the book' and their social interactions and functions raised by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya are elaborated on by David Freidenreich in his study, which attempts to discern one aspect of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's thought from the *Akhām ahl al-dhimmā*, via an analysis of his position on the legal rulings vis-à-vis the meat of animals slaughtered by non-Muslims. Freidenreich argues that Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's legal discussion of these positions was unprecedented in its level of intricacy, as he went beyond the simple legal treatment provided by the earlier Sunni legal authorities, including Ibn Taymiyya.

Jon Hoover's essay on Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's position on theodicy aptly begins the second thematic section, dealing with the theological and mystical aspects of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's thought. Hoover analyses Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's rationalisation of God's creation of the devil (*Iblīs*) and is based on a passage from *Shifāʾ al-ʿalīl*. Hoover's essay not only provides an annotated translation of this passage, but also elaborates on the underlying theological narratives and polemics from and against which Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya had constructed his own position. Hoover demonstrates through comparison how Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's position moved beyond Ibn Taymiyya by providing a more detailed methodological framework, explaining God's rationale in creating evil in general and the devil in particular. Finally, Hoover determines that Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's position was influenced not only by Ibn Taymiyya, but also by philosophical and theological luminaries such as Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna, d. 428/1037) and al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111).

Al-ṣawā'iq al-mursala is analysed by Yasir Qadhi in his essay to demonstrate Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's theological insight in the neo-Ḥanbalī polemic against the Ash'arites over their usage of *ta'wīl* in qur'anic hermeneutics. Qadhi provides a brief survey of the history of the manuscript, its literary style and its content, before proceeding to elucidate Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's basic argument, which in effect attempts to refute the fundamental premises and methodological tools referred to as *ṭawāghūt*, which the Ash'arites used in order to justify their *ta'wīl* when interpreting problematic qur'anic verses pertaining to the attributes of God. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's refutation revolves around four *ṭawāghūt*, and it also provides a thorough discussion of the crucial *ḥaqīqa-majāz* dichotomy. Abdessamad Belhaj continues with this discussion of the *ḥaqīqa-majāz* dichotomy elaborated in the *al-ṣawā'iq al-mursala*, and further explains its main contribution to Arabic rhetoric and its practical implications. Belhaj argues that Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's discussion of this topic was highly original and exceeded his master Ibn Taymiyya's ephemeral discussion. Finally, Belhaj demonstrates the comprehensive, interconnected and pragmatic nature of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's discussion, as it permeated both his theological and legal thought.

Ovamar Anjum's essay provides an insight into the mystical dimension of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's thought with reference to his magnum opus, *Madārij al-sālikīn*, an expanded commentary on the important Sufi manual, *Manāzil al-sā'irīn*, composed by his fellow Ḥanbalī and Sufi master al-Anṣārī al-Ḥarāwī (d. 481/1089). The essay proceeds with a description of both the structure and content of the *Madārij al-sālikīn*. Anjum maintains that the *Madārij al-sālikīn* is not only a source for the spiritual positions of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, but also a theological elaboration on epistemology, Sufi duality, gnosis (*ma'rifa*), and existential monism (*fanā*). It was in fact a critical commentary within which Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya either refuted or scripturally harmonized and interpreted al-Anṣārī al-Ḥarāwī's heretical tendencies of monism and antinomianism. The essay has a very useful appendix on the life and the *Manāzil al-sā'irīn* of al-Anṣārī al-Ḥarāwī.

The final thematic section deals with Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's thoughts on the nature of the soul and Prophetic medicine, aspects which do not necessarily receive as much academic consideration as his legal and theological thought. The three essays are based on two popular works, notably *Kitāb al-rūḥ* and *Al-ṭibb al-nabawī*, which is part of his larger *sīra*-based opus *Zād al-ma'ād*. Irmeli Perho's essay is based on the latter work, and it first attempts to locate it within the broader genre of Prophetic medical literature. Perho argues that, in comparison to other similar works, *Al-ṭibb al-nabawī* was distinctive and vastly innovative. An intriguing aspect was the attempt to synthesise 'rational and divine knowledge' (p. 194). It is argued that the synthetic Greco-Islamic medical literary nature and methodology distinguished *Al-ṭibb al-nabawī* from all other Prophetic medical works before and since. However, the distinctiveness of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's approach was not built upon by later writers but rather severely criticized by fellow Ḥanbalīs and other traditionalists as being overtly rational.

Tzvi Langermann applies A.I. Sabra's theory of 'appropriation' and 'naturalization' to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's *Kitāb al-rūḥ*. Sabra used his two-stage theory to demonstrate how Hellenistic learning of a scientific, medical and philosophical nature was subsequently incorporated into the Islamic tradition. Langermann argues that the second stage of 'naturalization' applies to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's endeavours to incorporate science via his *Kitāb al-rūḥ*. He demonstrates that Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya built upon the similar efforts of pioneers such as al-Ghazālī and, in particular, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 607/1210), whose influence on Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya is elaborated through the comparison of their respective discussions on the nature of the soul. The essay argues that Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya adhered to both rationalism and scientific empiricism, and continually attempted to synthesise and harmonise them with revelation. Langermann demonstrates that Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's attempts to rationally and empirically explain numerous extra-sensory

material imparted by revelatory scriptural sources was the hallmark of Sabra's second stage of 'naturalization'. It is regrettable that the final portion of Langermann's discussion is impeded by a crucial misprint in a diagram (p. 227) that he uses to elaborate a counter-argument al-Rāzī and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya produced against Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī (d. 560/1164). It is hoped that subsequent reprints will rectify this. In the final essay of the collection, Geneviève Gobillot also analyses Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's *Kitāb al-rūh*, concentrating on aspects of body, soul and spirit. She undertakes a thorough exploration of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's usage of the qur'anic terms *rūh* and *nafs*. She explains Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's theory of the spirit, and then compares it with al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī's (d. 318/936) theory elaborated in *Kitāb al-furūq*. Gobillot maintains that, despite the fact Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya critiques al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, he nevertheless at the same time utilises and incorporates countless aspects into his own theory.

The 10 essays that comprise this collection allow some tentative deductions about Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's intellectual thought. First, he was not a mere transmitter and elucidator of 'the Taymiyyan way', but rather an independent, innovative and creative scholar in his own right, as has been thoroughly demonstrated via an extensive analysis of his oeuvre. Second, his thought was interconnected and multifaceted, but quintessentially pragmatic in nature; for him legal, theological and spiritual discussions were not theoretical but practical, and needed to be articulated via one's own *Weltanschauung*. Third, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's main intellectual influence was Ibn Taymiyya, but he was highly influenced by numerous others, including al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064), al-Anṣārī al-Ḥarāwī, al-Ghazālī and al-Rāzī. Fourth, a significant revision is required of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's thought, as it can no longer be claimed that he was a rabid anti-rational scriptural literalist. Analysing his intellectual influences, as mentioned above, together with his oeuvre, indisputably presents an individual who utilises rational, empirical and Hellenic philosophies, Sufi mysticism, and scriptural sources in his synthetic legal, theological and spiritual endeavours. The editors and contributors of this collection must be applauded for their meticulous endeavours to bring Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya out of the intellectual darkness. The collection will undoubtedly form the foundation of all subsequent academic research and scholarship into his intellectual thought and legacy.

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